MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The computerised reservation system at New Delhi failed at 1520 hrs. on 21.1.1999 preceded by some problems of charts preparation resulting in blank printing. The system was set right at about 2130 hrs. on the same day. The fault has been attributed to the continuous heavy utilisation of the system resources for handling the total work load which has increased due to the increase in the number of locations windows, trains etc. Efforts are underway tc provide adequate back-up.

(c) Some instances of anti-social elements indulging in such activities have come to notice.

(d) 461 touts have been detected and booked during the last six months (August 1998 to January '1999).

Delay in Nizamuddin-Vishakhapatnam Link Express

603. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the specific causes for regular, daily delays in the Nizamuddin-Visakhapatnam link express;

(b) whether it is a fact that this train reaches Rajahmundry late by three hours on an average every day;

(c) whether frequent demands have been made to reduce the travelling time of this train, linking Delhi and Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for ignoring the demand to upgrade the Nizamuddin-Visakhapatnam link express?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Punctuality of trains including Nizamuddin-Visakhapatnam link Express was affected during this winter mainly due to fog in Northern and Central India.

(c) and (d) Speeding up of Nizamuddin-Visakhapatnam link Express has been examined but not found operationally feasible.

Degradation of Guwahati Bound Rajdhani Express

604. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons for degrading the Guwahati bound Rajdhani Express to the rank of ordinary express by allowing so many stoppages, unheard of in respect of superfast categories of trains like Rajdhani; and

(b) what is the plan of the Ministry to improve the speed of trains running between North-East and Delhi and South via Calcutta?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Rajdhani Express has not been downgraded to the rank of ordinary Express trains.

(b) Speeds of trains are dependent upon track structure, signalling and the type of traction apart from the number of stoppages provided. Improvement of speeds is an ongoing process on Indian Railways through gradual dupgradation of technology.